

*Amendment and Response to 1/26/2006 Office Action
U.S. App. Ser. No. 10/792,202
Attorney Docket: 056655/0121866*

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application. In the Office Action mailed January 26, 2006, claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,957,742 (Pillart). Claims 2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pillart in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,778,595 (Sable et al, "Sable").

I. Amendments to Specification

The Applicant has amended the Specification at pages 4, 5, and 8 in order to correct typographical errors in the Specification as filed. No new matter is added by these amendments. Entry of these amendments is therefore respectfully requested.

II. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(e)

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Pillart. Claims 3, 8, 12, 16, and 20 have been cancelled, with their subject matter being incorporated into independent claims 1, 6, and 14. The Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejections. Pillart teaches a vented trap having an externally operable venting mechanism. Element 26 of Pillart, the "venting handle", is cited as the equivalent of the "valve cap" of the Applicant's invention. However, in the Applicant's invention, the valve cap is connected to the screw-threaded portion of the valve, as is claimed by the Applicant (e.g., in claim 5, "a screw-threaded portion *connected* below the valve cap"). In the device of Pillart, venting handle 26 is clearly separate from element 42, the threaded "plug". This distinction is important to one of the benefits provided by the invention of the Applicant, which is specifically that the valve of the Applicant provides a one-piece device that is not easily detached from the filter pump, in order to prevent loss of, or damage to, the valve. In contrast, the device of Pillart is a multiple-piece device that is easily separated from the rest of the trap.

In order to more explicitly claim and point out this aspect of the Applicant's invention, the Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 6, and 14 to call out *a screw-threaded portion*

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connected to the valve cap. No new matter is added by this amendment, support for which is found throughout the Specification and in Figs. 1-4, as well as being inherent in the claims before amendment. Entry of these amendments is respectfully requested.

In addition, Pillart teaches that the threaded "plug" 42 is attached to a circular ridge 45. As shown in Fig. 3, the circular ridge of Pillart completely encircles the base of the plug, with the plug/ridge combination effectively resembling a screw or bolt. It is clear from the teaching of Pillart that this combination is inherently, and is intended to be, a rigid, noncompressible structure, as it is attached to the rest of the trap by screwing the plug into the device from the bottom and is designed to resist the force of spring 32 (as effected through washer 34) [Pillart at col. 2, lines 34-37]. In contrast, in the invention of the Applicant, the attached inverse hook or hooks of the valve stem are inwardly compressible, a functionality that is required by the fact that the method of inserting the valve stem into the filter pump retainer cover is to squeeze the hooks in order to insert them into the top of the cover, then to release them to their uncompressed state so that the valve cannot be easily or accidentally removed [Specification at page 3, lines 9-17; page 5, lines 15-22; page 7, lines 1-3; page 8, lines 6-14]. This functionality serves to enable one of the benefits provided by the invention of the Applicant, which is specifically that the valve of the Applicant cannot be easily or accidentally detached from the filter pump, which feature operates to prevent loss of, or damage to, the valve. In contrast, the threaded portion of Pillart is easily separated from the rest of the valve and from the trap.

In order to more particularly claim and point out this aspect of the Applicant's invention, the Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 6, and 14 to call out *the inverse hook being inwardly compressible for insertion into an opening*, and has amended independent claims 6 and 14 and dependent claim 5 to call out that *the uncompressed width across the inverse hook and the bottom of the valve stem is wider than the opening of the filter cap retainer*. No new matter is added by these amendments, support for which is found in the Specification at least at page 3, lines 9-17; page 5, lines 15-22; page 6, lines 19-23; page 7, lines 1-3; page 8, lines 6-14; and in Figs. 1-4. Entry of these amendments is respectfully requested.

Neither the art of record, nor any other art of which the Applicant is aware, shows a valve as disclosed and claimed by the Applicant, wherein a screw-threaded portion is *connected to a valve cap*, a valve stem connected to the screw-threaded portion terminates in at least one

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inwardly compressible inverse hook, and the uncompressed width across the inverse hook and the bottom of the valve stem is wider than the opening of the filter cap retainer. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 5, 6, and 14, as amended, is therefore respectfully requested.

Further, because claim 5 depends from claim 1, which is in condition for allowance, claim 5 is similarly in condition for allowance. Because claim 10 depends from claim 6, which is in condition for allowance, claim 10 is also now in condition for allowance. Because claim 18 depends from claim 14, which is in condition for allowance, claim 18 is also now in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of claims 5, 10, and 18 is therefore also respectfully requested.

III. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pillart in view of Sable. Claims 4, 9, 13, and 17 have been cancelled, with their subject matter being incorporated into independent claims 1, 6, and 14. The Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection. The Applicant's invention is not obvious over Pillart in combination with Sable or any other art of record, because none teach or suggest a valve as disclosed and claimed by the Applicant, wherein a screw-threaded portion is *connected to* a valve cap, a valve stem connected to the screw-threaded portion terminates in at least one *inwardly compressible inverse hook, and the uncompressed width across the inverse hook and the bottom of the valve stem is wider than the opening of the filter cap retainer.*

Further, because claim 2 depends from claim 1, which is in condition for allowance, claim 2 is similarly in condition for allowance. Because claims 7 and 11 depend from claim 6, which is in condition for allowance, claims 7 and 11 are also now in condition for allowance. Because claims 15 and 19 depend from claim 14, which is in condition for allowance, claims 15 and 19 are also now in condition for allowance. Withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of claims 2, 7, 11, 15, and 19 is therefore also respectfully requested.

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IV. New claims

New dependent claims 21-23 have been added to claim a preferred embodiment of the invention, wherein the number of inverse hooks is at least two. Support for these claims is found throughout the Specification, including at least at page 3, lines 3-4 and lines 11-17; page 4, lines 18-20; page 4, line 25 to page 5, line 3; page 5, lines 10-11 and lines 17-22; and page 8, lines 14-15 of the Specification and in Figs. 1-4. No new matter is added by these claims. In view of the previous cancellation of claims 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, and 20, no fee is necessitated by these additional claims. Entry of these new claims is therefore respectfully requested.

New claim 21 is dependent on claim 1, which the Applicant believes is in condition for allowance, so claim 21 is also in condition for allowance, which action is therefore respectfully requested. New claim 22 is dependent on claim 6, which the Applicant believes is in condition for allowance, so claim 22 is also in condition for allowance, which action is therefore respectfully requested. New claim 23 is dependent on claim 14, which the Applicant believes is in condition for allowance, so claim 23 is also in condition for allowance, which action is therefore respectfully requested.

Furthermore, to the extent that Pillart teaches an element that can be construed as an “inverse hook” (being described by Pillart rather as a “circular ridge”), Pillart teaches only a single hook-like element that completely encircles the base of the plug of Pillart. In contrast, the invention of the Applicant includes any number of inverse hooks that extend separately from the base of the valve stem, the number being determined by the particular application. In the preferred embodiment, the number of hooks is at least two, as having hooks in more than one location on the valve stem increases the likelihood that the valve stem cannot be accidentally removed from the device. Entry and allowance of new claims 21-23 is therefore respectfully requested.

V. Conclusion

Claims 1, 5, 6, and 14 have been amended. Claims 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, and 20 have been cancelled. New claims 21-23 have been added. The Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, and 21-23 are now in condition for allowance. For this

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reason, and in view of the foregoing arguments, the Applicant believes that this application is now in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. Should there remain any unresolved issues, as well as telephone Norma E. Henderson, Applicant's Attorney, at 603-437-4400, so that all such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Date

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